

The Secretary's Policy for Achieving Context Sensitive Solutions

The Department is committed to partnering with communities to provide Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) to transportation and public works projects. CSS is a collaborative approach to decision making whereby transportation solutions are developed that fit within the context of their surroundings. Context Sensitive Solutions can address a wide range of community needs such as cultural and historic preservation, community growth and sustainability, access, cohesion, aesthetics, safety, mobility, and cost effectiveness. Applying CSS principles is important, because it improves the quality of life for Louisiana citizens, enhances business recruitment, and improves DOTD's image and reputation, while building a great state for which we can all be proud.

It is the Department's policy to consider CSS for all of its transportation and public works projects, regardless of whether the projects are State or Federally funded. The Department recognizes that solutions will vary depending on the project's complexity and potential impacts to the surrounding community. This is a policy, not a standard. The intent is to deliver better projects for the community and the State as a whole.

CSS are developed from a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to fitting projects into their surroundings and take into account community needs. To develop CSS, the Department must engage stakeholders early, and sometimes often, to discover their needs. Applying CSS does not mean that all the desires of the community and other stakeholders will be incorporated into a project. The Department must balance all needs with the project's purpose and need, as well as the project's budget. When applying CSS principles, the Department will strive to address and comply with the current American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) guidelines. The final decision, regarding the scope of a project, remains with the Department.

The Department will work with the local officials to find ways to implement CSS in every project. This may include asking local governments and metropolitan organizations for funding participation or suggesting alternative funding sources for specific project features desired by the community which are beyond the Department's normal project budget.

To assist in the consideration and implementation of CSS in all stages of project development, the Department will train project managers as well as other project development staff in CSS principles and effective public involvement techniques.

This policy was signed by Cedric Grant, Deputy Secretary, on May 26, 2006.